

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 22830 01 OF 02 241404Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-12 /094 W
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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 22830

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OCLR, MILI, EG

SUBJECT: USS SAMPSON IMPRESSIONS OF EGYPT/ISRAEL (U)

1. SINCE RECENT (16-20 DEC) ALEXANDRIA PORT VISITOR
USS SAMPSON HAD BEEN IN ISRAEL TWO DAYS AFTER VISIT
OF PRESIDENT SADAT, SOME INTERESTING FIRST-HAND
INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED AND IS QUOTED IN PART.

"ALL COMMENTS ARE BASED ON UNOFFICIAL CONVERSATIONS/
OBSERVATIONS BY OFFICERS AND CREWMEMBERS OF SAMPSON
WITH LOCAL MILITARY MEMBERS DURING RECEPTIONS AND TOURS
OF SHIP, AND CONTACTS WITH LOCAL POPULACE WHILE ON TOURS
OR GENERAL LIBERTY.

- A. ISRAEL:
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 22830 01 OF 02 241404Z

- (1) GENERAL PUBLIC SINCERELY DESIRES PEACE DUE
TO LONGSTANDING WAR EFFORTS WITH ASSOCIATED COSTS OF
MATERIAL/MANPOWER. PARTICULARLY DESIRE PEACE WITH EGYPT
SINCE THIS COUNTRY PROVIDED BUIK OF ENEMY MANPOWER/
WEAPONRY IN RECENT WARS.
- (2) AS A RESULT OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT
AND PUBLIC TALKS IN JERUSALEM, GENERAL POPULACE AND

ISRAELI MILITARY FEEL THAT HE IS A PERSON WHO CAN BE TRUSTED AND WHO WILL BE HONEST DURING ANY PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THIS EVIDENTLY WAS NOT THE CASE BEFORE HIS VISIT. THE NAME OF PRESIDENT SADAT COULD BE HEARD IN MOST CONVERSATIONS IN LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND CLUBS; A GOOD INDICATION OF HIS IMPACT ON THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

- (3) GENERAL PUBLIC AND ISRAELI MILITARY BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL IS WILLING TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS TO ATTAIN PEACE; THESE WOULD INCLUDE A FORM OF ARAB RULE IN CONTESTED AREAS. GENERAL PUBLIC AND MILITARY STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT CONTROL OF GOLAN HEIGHTS MUST BE RETAINED BY ISRAEL.

- (4) WHILE PEACE WITH ALL ARAB COUNTRIES IS THE DESIRED GOAL, GENERAL POPULACE AND ISRAELI MILITARY FEEL THAT A SEPARATE PEACE TREATY WITH EGYPT IS AN ACCEPTABLE SUBSTITUTE, SINCE EGYPT CONSTITUTES THE BULK OF THE ARAB WAR EFFORT.

- (B) EGYPT:

- (1) GENERAL POPULACE SINCERELY DESIRES PEACE DUE TO EXTENSIVE LOSS OF LIFE AMONG EGYPTIAN FAMILIES DURING WARS. EGYPTIAN MILITARY CITED DRAIN ON NATIONAL ECONOMY AND BEING TIRED OF HAVING BEEN ON CONTINUOUS WAR FOOTING FOR LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AS PRIMARY REASONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. GENERAL POPULACE AND EGYPTIAN MILITARY
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PAGE 03 CAIRO 22830 01 OF 02 241404Z

VIEW THEMSELVES AS BEING HISTORICALLY PEACEFUL PEOPLE WHILE THEY CONSIDER THE ISRAELIS TO BE NATURALLY WARLIKE.

- (2) GENERAL POPULACE AND EGYPTIAN MILITARY ARE VERY PROUD OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S APPARENT SUCCESS IN JERUSALEM. THEY ARE UNITED IN SUPPORT OF HIM AND HIGHLY TOUT HIM FOR THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR THE BREAKTHROUGH IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. GENERAL PUBLIC BELIEVES THAT PRESIDENT CARTER IS THE "MAN BEHIND THE SCENE" IN THE PEACE TALKS AND THAT HE IS ACTIVELY SUPPORTING EGYPTIAN PEACE INITIATIVES.

- (3) GENERAL POPULACE AND EGYPTIAN MILITARY STATE THAT ISRAEL MUST MAKE CONSIDERABLE CONCESSIONS FOR PEACE TO BE REALIZED.

- (4) GENERAL POPULACE BELIEVES THAT IF ISRAEL MAKES AN HONEST PEACE OFFER AND OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES TURN IT DOWN, EGYPT SHOULD CONCLUDE A SEPARATE PEACE TREATY WITH ISRAEL SINCE "EGYPT DID MOST OF THE FIGHTING IN THE LAST WAR SHILE THE OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES TALKED." EGYPTIAN REAR ADMIRAL AND DIRECTOR OF ALEXANDRIA HOSPITALS TOLD SAMPSON'S COMMANDING OFFICER IN INDEPENDENT CONVERSATIONS THAT A PEACE TREATY THAT DID NOT INCLUDE ALL ARAB

COUNTRIES WAS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT THAT A SEPARATE "GENERAL AGREEMENT" (SIC) BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT WAS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY.

- C. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

- (1) ISRAELI MILITARY AND GENERAL POPULACE WERE VERY FRIENDLY TO SAMPSON PERSONNEL. FRIENDSHIP APPEARED TO BE BASED ON LONG STANDING SUPPORT OF ISRAEL BY AMERICA. ISRAELI NAVY MADE SPECIAL EFFORTS TO ENSURE AN ENJOYABLE

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 22830 02 OF 02 241111Z
ACTION NEA-10

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 22830

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- (2) EGYPTIAN GENERAL POPULACE AND MILITARY WERE ALSO VERY FRIENDLY TO SAMPSON PERSONNEL. THE GENERAL SPIRIT OF FRIENDLINESS EXHIBITED BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC TOWARDS SAMPSON CREWMEMBERS, WHEN THEY WERE RECOGNIZED AS AMERICANS, CANNOT BE OVEREMPHASIZED; CRIES OF WELCOME FOLLOWED US THROUGHOUT ALEXANDRIA.

- (3) EGYPTIAN GENERAL POPULACE DO NOT LIKE RUSSIANS BECAUSE "THEY NEVER SPENT ANY MONEY IN EGYPT." EGYPTIAN NAVAL OFFICERS TOOK GREAT DELIGHT IN TELLING STORIES OF HOW THEY THREW RUSSIAN ADVISORS OFF THEIR SHIPS EVEN PRIOR TO THE SHIFT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND EGYPT. EGYPTIAN REAR ADMIRAL PROUDLY EXPLAINED HOW HIS GROUP OF SHIPS, AFTER THE SHIFT IN RELATIONS, ATTEMPTED TO CUT CABLES ON AND BLOW-UP RUSSIAN MOORING BUOYS IN GULF OF SOLLUM. EGYPTIAN NAVY OFFICERS FELT THEY WERE

TREATED BADLY WHEN THEY WENT TO RUSSIA FOR TRAINING.

- (4) SENIOR EGYPTIAN MILITARY OFFICERS BELIEVE
AMERICA WOULD BE VERY WISE TO SUPPORT EGYPT BECAUSE, IN
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 22830 02 OF 02 241111Z

THEIR OPINION, EGYPT IS THE ONLY COUNTRY THAT CAN CONTROL
COMMUNISM ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

- (5) EGYPTIAN MILITARY ARE PLEASED THAT RUSSIAN
CULTURAL CENTERS WERE CLOSED FOR THEY WERE VIEWED AS
SUBVERSIVE MEANS TO SPREAD COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY AMONG
GENERAL POPULACE." END QUOTE. EILTS

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